

## Thoughts on Ministry of Healing

### (38) The Importance of Seeking True Knowledge (pages 451-457)

#### Summary:

The highest possible knowledge is the revelation of God and Jesus Christ as expressed in character. The emphasis in this chapter is on steady, lifelong commitment to God and the spiritual growth that results from such commitment.

#### Thoughts:

According to this chapter, spiritual life is hard work (452), it is lifelong (452), it is self-denying (452-453) and self-renouncing (455), it is like a warfare that requires training and discipline (453-454), it requires intense focus and must be God-directed at all times (455-456). When engaged in in these ways, the result is an ever-growing knowledge of God and spiritual commitment that results in greater service (457).

Reading this chapter can be a depressing experience for those who struggle with self-discipline. The chapter is strong on exhortation but seems almost void of encouraging words. Unfortunately, the more we concentrate on sanctification (spiritual growth and self-control), the more miserable we may become. So reading of this chapter needs to be balanced with the uplifting readings in the last four chapters. There is also a powerful balancing statement in *Steps to Christ*, page 64: "There are those who have known the pardoning love of Christ and who really desire to be children of God, yet they realize that their character is imperfect, their life faulty, and they are ready to doubt whether their hearts have been renewed by the Holy Spirit. To such I would say, Do not draw back in despair. We shall often have to bow down and weep at the feet of Jesus because of our shortcomings and mistakes, but we are not to be discouraged. Even if we are overcome by the enemy, we are not cast off, not forsaken and rejected of God."

The knowledge that is talked about in this chapter is not intellectual knowledge. It is knowledge as related to character. It provides a true knowledge of self. One of the most difficult things human beings face is how to change our habits in a positive way. The true knowledge sought in this chapter is knowledge of how to turn our thoughts away from self and toward God. In the context of a secure relationship with a loving God, the counsels in this chapter can encourage a closer and closer walk with God.

#### Quotable Quotes:

"Wrongs cannot be righted, nor can reformations in conduct be made by a few feeble, intermittent efforts. Character building is the work, not of a day, nor of a year, but of a lifetime. The struggle for conquest over self, for holiness and heaven, is a lifelong struggle. Without continual effort and constant activity, there can be no advancement in the divine life, no attainment of the victor's crown." (452)

"The life of the apostle Paul was a constant conflict with self. He said, "I die daily." 1 Corinthians 15:31. His will and his desires every day conflicted with duty and the will of God. Instead of following inclination, he did God's will, however crucifying to his nature. (452-453)

"There is a science of Christianity to be mastered--a science as much deeper, broader, higher than any human science as the heavens are higher than the earth. The mind is to be disciplined, educated, trained; for we are to do service for God in ways that are not in harmony

with inborn inclination. Hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil must be overcome. Often the education and training of a lifetime must be discarded, that one may become a learner in the school of Christ. Our hearts must be educated to become steadfast in God. We are to form habits of thought that will enable us to resist temptation. We must learn to look upward.” (453-454)

“The thoughts must be centered upon God. We must put forth earnest effort to overcome the evil tendencies of the natural heart. Our efforts, our self-denial and perseverance, must be proportionate to the infinite value of the object of which we are in pursuit. Only by overcoming as Christ overcame shall we win the crown of life.” (455)

“In order to receive help from Christ, we must realize our need. We must have a true knowledge of ourselves. It is only he who knows himself to be a sinner that Christ can save. Only as we see our utter helplessness and renounce all self-trust, shall we lay hold on divine power.

“It is not only at the beginning of the Christian life that this renunciation of self is to be made. At every advance step heavenward it is to be renewed. All our good works are dependent on a power outside of ourselves; therefore there needs to be a continual reaching out of the heart after God, a constant, earnest confession of sin and humbling of the soul before Him. Perils surround us; and we are safe only as we feel our weakness and cling with the grasp of faith to our mighty Deliverer.” (455-456)

“We must turn away from a thousand topics that invite attention. There are matters that consume time and arouse inquiry, but end in nothing. The highest interests demand the close attention and energy that are so often given to comparatively insignificant things.” (456)

“The knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ expressed in character is an exaltation above everything else that is esteemed on earth or in heaven. It is the very highest education. It is the key that opens the portals of the heavenly city. This knowledge it is God's purpose that all who put on Christ shall possess.” (457)

### **Tweets of Healing:**

As the sacrifice in our behalf was complete, so our restoration from the defilement of sin is to be complete. (451)

Character building is the work, not of a day, nor of a year, but of a lifetime. (452)

The life of the apostle Paul was in constant conflict with self. (452)

The mind is to be disciplined and trained; for we must at times serve God in ways that are not natural to us. (453)

The angels of God are seeking to attract us from ourselves and from earthly things. Let them not labor in vain. (454)

The thoughts must be centered on God. (455)

Only as we see our utter helplessness and renounce all self-trust, shall we lay hold on divine power. (455)

Perils surround us; and we are safe only as we feel our weakness and cling with the grasp of faith to our mighty Deliverer. (455-456)

We must turn away from a thousand topics that invite attention. (456)

The knowledge of God expressed in character exalts one above any other quality. (457)